

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 8, 2003

CONTACT: Israel Klein

or Benn Tannenbaum

(202) 225-2836

82 HOUSE MEMBERS URGE REJECTION OF NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT BY U.S.

Markey Letter urges Appropriations Committee to cut funding for 'Bunker Busters'

WASHINGTON, DC- Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and 81 Representatives today released a letter to House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development Chairman David Hobson (R-OH) and Ranking Member Peter Visclosky (D-IN) asking them to reject President Bush's request for \$15.5 million in next year's budget to continue studies on a nuclear bunker buster weapon, also known as the "Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator."

"We've just fought a war in Iraq, ostensibly to curtail Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs. We are currently trying to dissuade North Korea and Iran from developing nuclear weapons of their own. What signal does it send to the rest of the world if at the same time we are proceeding with plans to build a whole new generation of nuclear weapons?" Rep. Markey explained.

Rep. Markey added, "There are serious questions about whether a nuclear bunker buster could ever work as advertised and whether there is any real military requirement for such a weapon. We know that our own military currently is trying to move away from nuclear weapons and would rather have new, more powerful, more accurate conventional weapons."

Advocates of the nuclear bunker buster propose this new nuclear weapon as a way to destroy hardened and deeply buried targets and destroy chemical and biological weapons stockpiles. However, the physical reality is quite different: experiments at Los Alamos National Laboratory have shown that nothing can tunnel more than 4-5 times its length, or roughly 40-50 feet for a typical bomb. At that depth, there is a limit to how deep or hardened a target that can be destroyed. Further, a nuclear explosion at that depth would not be contained, and even a small, 1-kiloton nuclear bomb would hurl one million cubic feet of radioactive dirt and rock into the air and onto the surrounding countryside. Additionally, the intense heat required to destroy chemical and biological weapons would only be generated in a small volume; instead, the force of the explosion would mix the chemical or biological weapons with the radioactive dirt and spread it over hundreds of square kilometers.

Rep. Markey concluded, "Instead of making new nuclear weapons and being part of the proliferation problem, we should be focused on halting the spread of nuclear weapons. The Cold War is over. Why – and with whom-- are we trying to start a new arms race?"

The following representatives joined Rep. Markey in signing the letter: Dicks (D-WA) Allen (D-ME), Tauscher (D-CA), Waxman (D-CA), Spratt (D-SC), Skelton (D-MO), Harman (D-CA), Conyers (D-MI), McGovern (D-MA), Lewis (D-GA) Frank (D-MA), Moore (D-KS), Grijalva (D-AZ), Hoeffel (D-PA), DeFazio (D-OR), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Norton (D-DC), Holt (D-NJ), Christensen (D-VI), Doggett (D-TX), Payne (D-NJ), Cooper (D-TN), Mike Thompson (D-CA), Waters (D-CA), George Miller (D-CA), Sherrod Brown (D-CA), Matheson (D-UT), Engel (D-NY), Oberstar (D-MN), Tierney (D-MA), Acevedo-Vila (D-PR), Sanders (I-VT), McDermott (D-WA), Price (D-NC), Baldwin (D-WI), Towns (D-NY), Woolsey (D-CA), Timothy Ryan (D-OH), John Larson (D-CT), Schakowsky (D-IL), Linda Sanchez (D-CA), Baird (D-WA), Rodriguez (D-TX), Nadler (D-NY), Susan Davis (D-CA), Hinchey (D-NY), Sherman (D-CA), Blumenauer (D-OR), Slaughter (D-NY), Solis (D-CA), Fattah (D-PA), Mark Udall (D-CO), Evans (D-IL), Capps (D-CA), Crowley (D-NY), Berman (D-CA), Langevin (D-RI), Snyder (D-AR), Lynch (D-MA), Jim Davis (D-FL), Delahunt (D-MA), McCollum (D-MN), Tom Udall (D-NM), Neal (D-MA), Eshoo (D-CA), Abercrombie (D-HI), Lofgren (D-CA), Shays (R-CT), Adam Smith (D-WA), Stark (D-CA), Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Strickland (D-OH), Kucinich (D-OH), Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), Berkley (D-NV), Watson (D-CA), Honda (D-CA), Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Owens (D-NY), Millender-McDonald (D-CA), Stupak (D-MI)

#